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SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 13, 1954

Went to Doc's office and dictated a letter to Fred Alger about my conversation with Van Zeeland. I sent another on the same subject, but different in content, to Foster as follows:

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" TOP SECRET - EYES ONLY SECRETARY OF STATE

American Embassy
The Hague, Netherlands,
February 13, 1954.

"Dear Foster:

"I had a satisfactory talk with van Zeeland yesterday on the EDC situation in Belgium. André de Staercke was present.

"1. I am addressing this letter to you "eyes only" because part of it relates to a matter - namely atomic energy - which van Zeeland asked that I refer to you alone. He is very concerned over the progress of negotiations between our two Governments on this subject. Although Lewis Straus is an old friend of his, he is dissatisfied with what he considers Straus' lack of comprehension of the political considerations in Belgium that have a bearing on this problem. The American Embassy in Brussels has no connection with it. It is handled directly by van Zeeland and his atomic energy commissioner with State and AEC in Washington, via Silvercruys. Van Zeeland states that the present American Government position is too inflexible to offer a prospect of working out a satisfactory new arrangement. He hopes some modification can be made in what he calls this rigidity so that the negotiations may go forward satisfactorily. Evidently he thinks this is especially important because of the comparatively imminent Belgian elections. They are tentatively set for April 4. There has been strong pressure on him from the Parliament to release either the text or at least a precise summary of the previous agreements.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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"He told me it was unnecessary for him to say anything more on this subject to me since I was unfamiliar with it, and he was only apprising me of the above in order to get a message directly to you regarding the seriousness with which he views this situation.

"II. He is confident of obtaining a favorable vote, probably a two thirds majority, on ratification of EDC by the Senate. Two days ago the Committee which represents about 20% of the membership of that body voted for the Government report by 27-10 with only two or three abstentions. He had anticipated considerable difficulty over the issue raised at the Berlin Conference in connection with Article 7. I do not like to suggest an extra reading when you are already so over-burdened, but some day it would amuse you to read his interpretation of the various questions raised in this particular. It is a masterpiece of plausible obscurity. The debate will probably start on the 16th and will last one to two weeks.

"In short, this affair, barring accidents, is in good shape.

"III. He has little confidence in the determination of the present French Governr nt to push the EDC Treaty vigorously in a parliamentary debate. He thinks our only real hope of success in that connection lies in Bidault. He suggested three things our Government should prepare in advance of the debate, and be ready to deliver, if it proved desirable, at appropriate times during the debate. (a) Willingness by Adenauer to make a definitive proposal to the French Government on the Saar limited by a reserve that it would be totally withdrawn if the EDC Treaty is not ratified by France. (Van Zeeland is not entirely clear in his own mind as to how far this negotiation might proceed in the immediate future, since he thinks it possible the French might be willing to postpone it and make it

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a post-ratification negotiation.) (b) Attempt to induce Great Britain to offer a brigade of British volunteers to the European Army. (This subject has already been discussed by de Staercke with Churchill. It is most important that at least for the time being knowledge of this fact should be confined in the American Government to you and your most immediate advisors. I doubt that even Eden knows about it and we should not be prepared to move in the matter unless requested to do so after de Staercke has explored it further with Churchill and probably also with Ismay.) (c) We should have the US position in connection with the stationing of American troops in Europe sufficiently formulated so that we could act quickly if it proved necessary and determining in the course of the French parliamentary debate. (Van Zeeland does not mean by this that we should negotiate with the French on the subject but that our own position should be sufficiently prepared in advance so that we could on short notice make a statement, probably in the context of our NATO commitments, which might be of assistance in securing wavering votes for EDC.)

"IV. There was one other matter that van Zeeland asked me particularly to bring to your personal attention. This is the conviction that his plan for demilitarized zones in Germany should again be given serious consideration after the Berlin Conference has terminated. I think I had some success in persuading him that it would be most inadvisable to discuss it until the French Parliament had passed on the EDC Treaty.

"Nevertheless he is so bent upon securing publicity for this proposition, no doubt in connection with the forthcoming elections, that he may again advance it. I would suggest for your consideration the possibility of your writing him a personal letter saying that you would, upon your

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return to Washington, look into the atomic energy matter, but that as regards the 'van Zeeland Plan' you hoped he would lay this most interesting proposal aside until an opportunity presented itself for you and himself to discuss it further in the light of whatever action might have been taken by the French Parliament on EDC.

"I am returning to Paris on Sunday and will of course be available to go to Berlin if called. Otherwise, I shall plan to go to Rome on Saturday and see what the situation there may now be in regard to the EDC. I have talked to Livy about this and he believes it might be useful.

"I saw Freddy Alger and others at the Embassy when I was in Brussels, and I am sending him today a letter covering the general comments made by van Zeeland on the debate in the Belgian Parliament. At van Zeeland's express request I am saying nothing to anyone except you about the points mentioned in this letter.

"With warm regards,

Very sincerely yours,

David K. E. Bruce"

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We inspected Doc's fine and perfectly selected wines this morning, one of which, a Chateau Latour 1926, we had for lunch. A magnificent bottle, the wine dark almost to blackness.

This afternoon I bought a pair of brass coal tongs and a copper coal bucket - both 18th Century.

Then, Doc, I, and Ben (his ingratiating tyrant, a Doberman Pinzer) walked in "Larkin's Folly", the huge park bought by FBO for U. S. Embassy purposes. It remains undeveloped and Doc thinks it will be sold to the Queen and she will build a royal city palace there. I hope this is done. The property is fit for a queen but unsuitable for an American Ambassador, even in my estimation, who believes most of our diplomatic establishments are too small.

Tonight we had a delicious and delightful dinner - oysters, cheese soufflé, Chateaubriand, a 1950 Chassagne-Montrachet and a 1947 Corton Grancey of Louis Latour's.

Have been reading Erlanger's "Duc de Buckingham". A really fantastic character, master of Britain in his early twenties and remaining so, to its cost, until his assassination.

Took the nine o'clock night train for Paris.

I had an opportunity during this trip to learn more about André de Staercke's life. He was educated by the Jesuits and the present General of the Order of Jesuits, Jansen, a Belgian, was one of his teachers and has remained an intimate friend. He was in the Belgian Resistance after his country was overrun and finally walked as far as the Franco-Spanish border. From there, he made his way to Lisbon, thence to London, where he became Secretary to the Prime Minister in exile. For some years after he returned to Belgium he was a sort of Chief of Staff to the Prince Regent and his close friend. At some point he was exiled from Belgium for

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six months and spent this time at his villa in Italy. This extraordinary man has devoted friends in almost every European country as well as in England.

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